

next World Congress of Psychiatry in Yokohama, Japan, August 2002. Issues involved include ethics of psychotherapy, conflict of interest in relationship with industry, conflicts arising with third party payers, and violation of the clinical boundaries and trust between psychiatrists and patients.

The Declaration of Madrid has been translated into many languages and constitutes the ethical codes and principles by which WPA member societies should abide. Since the approval of the Declaration, the WPA has been carrying out opinion surveys among its member societies regarding the activities of its various components. The WPA 2001 survey revealed that 76.1% of member societies

believe that the WPA has fulfilled its statutory purpose of promoting the highest ethical standards in psychiatric work. This is opposed to 65.6% who gave the same rating in the 1998 survey. 16.8% of societies were not in agreement with that position and 7.1% did not provide a rating. The quality of the WPA Declaration of Madrid and its additional guidelines obtained one of the highest ratings (39% for excellent and 76% for good or excellent). At present, almost all WPA member societies have endorsed the Declaration and its specific guidelines, and the WPA is encouraging member societies to have their own national ethics committee (currently existing in 57.6% of the societies).

lations of the ethical guidelines for the practice of psychiatry as stated in the Declaration of Madrid and its additional guidelines in order to make recommendations to the Executive Committee as to any possible action".

This change in the terms of reference of the Review Committee reflects a development in its work. From primarily reviewing individual complaints and allegations regarding abuse of psychiatry, the Committee takes a more proactive form as it may express a concern regarding countries/regions where the intentions of the Declaration of Madrid are not respected, e.g. lacking access to mental health care, or disrespect for psychiatric patients.

The Review Committee has established its rules of procedures, approved by the WPA Executive Committee. The procedures outline the criteria for receivability of cases, information required to start a case, the various steps in the investigation procedure, and the outcome hereof. The Review Committee may also initiate reviews in the absence of a complaint and act upon information available of alleged violations of the ethical guidelines.

Since 1996 the Review Committee has received more than 40 cases/requests. Several cases have after thorough investigation been found to be outside the mandate of the Committee. Some of these concern complaints assessed not to refer to any breach of the ethical guidelines, e.g. a case where the complainant had conducted a parapsychological investigation into telepathy. Others concern general issues of ethical interest but judged not to deal with breaches of the ethical guidelines, e.g. a case on alleged discrimination of gays at work, in the army and in educational institutions. A couple of cases relate to the general condition of mental health care in individual countries and have been considered in collaboration with the WPA Executive Committee. A couple of cases have subsequently been withdrawn or considered closed due to lack of information, e.g. a case of alleged sexual harassment by a psychiatrist.

Ten cases relate to the issue of

## The work of the WPA Committee to Review the Abuse of Psychiatry

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In 1977, at the 6th World Congress of Psychiatry, the first WPA ethical guidelines, the Hawaii Declaration, were approved by the General Assembly. This document reflected a growing interest to stimulate professional awareness of ethical and moral problems also at the international level. At the same World Congress, it was decided to create a committee, later called the Review Committee, that had as its mandate to investigate any alleged abuse of psychiatry for political purposes.

At the General Assembly during the World Congress in Vienna in 1983, the work and status of the Review Committee were discussed and it was decided to let the Committee become statutory. The General Assembly decided further to change the scope of the Committee towards complaints about not only political but any abuse of psychiatry. It was emphasized that

the WPA is not a human rights organization and that the Review Committee should only handle complaints about specific acts of abuse against specific persons and carried out by specific psychiatrists.

At the General Assembly in 1996, Paul Fink, who chaired the Review Committee at that time, reported that the Committee had received just a few cases for consideration, primarily cases in which mentally ill persons brought forward alleged abuses of psychiatry but where there seemed little obvious evidence to substantiate their complaints. In the light of that, he suggested to terminate the Review Committee in its present form or to merge the Review Committee with the WPA Ethics Committee. The General Assembly, however, decided to renew the Review Committee.

In light of the experiences gained in the period 1996-99, the mandate of the Review Committee was modified by the 1999 General Assembly as follows: "The Review Committee shall review complaints and other issues and initiate investigations on the vio-

“Whistleblowers”: they refer to complaints against an administrative praxis in Australia where psychiatric assessments have been used in screening the labor force. The ethical implications hereof are presently discussed with the local Member Society.

Several cases are in the process of investigation. This is done in collaboration with the relevant Member Society. Among these cases is the issue of Falun Gong. The Review Committee is here working closely with the local Member Society, that has affirmed its commitment to the ethical standards of the Declaration of Madrid, its opposition to involuntary hospitalization of individuals who are not mentally ill, and its plan to initiate an investigation of specific cases. This investigation is actually ongoing. The Review Committee has expressed its willingness to collaborate in any investigation or relevant educational activities.

The Review Committee was established with the purpose not just to investigate cases of alleged abuse of psychiatry, but to sensitize the WPA Member Societies and other components to become more aware of ethical issues and be more concerned hereof. The belief has been that such an awareness and concern may facilitate a better understanding and hopefully result in the protection of citizens from any abuse of psychiatry. Since the creation of the Committee, the concern for ethical aspects has not diminished and the necessity of a close collaboration between the Committee and the Ethics Committee, that is developing new ethical guidelines, remains. Increased focus on preventive aspects and the need for educational activities, e.g. in collaboration with the Operational Committee on Education as well as Member Societies, should be recommended.

established by the General Assembly in 1996 and then upgraded in 1999. Zonal Representatives, as individual officers and as WPA Board, embody institutional goals of decentralized and participatory governance. As experience has been gained over the past six years, Zonal Representatives as a group are displaying greater effectiveness in the fulfilment of their coordinative and two-way communication roles in their respective Zones, as well as their advisory and overseeing responsibilities vis-à-vis the Executive Committee. Additionally, through their work at the regional or continental level, Zonal Representatives are making the five-Region structure of WPA more viable. This is illustrated below through some highlights of Zonal Representatives' recent activities, statutorily coordinated and supported by the Secretary General and the Secretariat.

– Zonal Representatives in the European Region initiated at the WPA Regional Meeting in London, July 2001, a developing network involving WPA Member Societies as well as officers of the European Union and WHO. Through additional sessions in Madrid, October 2001 and Stockholm, May 2002, and supported by an electronic newsletter, they are focusing efforts on organizational matters and medical student education.

– Zonal Representatives in Africa and the Middle East have been instrumental in the organization of several psychiatric encounters over the past year, the most recent being the WPA Regional Meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt in January 2002. Their work has been facilitated by the Institutional Program on Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia, and rewarded by the recent admission to WPA membership of the national psychiatric associations in Ghana, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya.

– Zonal Representatives in the Americas have contributed decisively to making this region highly vibrant and participatory in a wide range of WPA activities. WPA Regional Meetings have taken place in Buenos Aires in October

## News from the WPA Secretariat

**JUAN E. MEZZICH**

WPA Secretary General

WPA continues to grow both in institutional strength and in membership, the latest admission being that of the Kenya Psychiatric Association as our 119th Member Society. As part of its general mission of supporting administratively the functioning of WPA, the Secretariat has carried out in recent months a number of informational, consultative and promotional activities, some of which are highlighted below.

### Broad communicational activities

– The Secretariat completed in March 2002 the latest edition of the *Directory of WPA Components*, which contains professional affiliation, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail information for all WPA officers and Secretariat staff members. The *Directory* is

produced from our computerized data base, which is continuously updated and verified.

– In collaboration with the Educational Coordination Center, the Secretariat has upgraded *WPA Online* in terms of design, searching power, and e-mail and website opportunities for WPA components. This development has led to striking growth in number of visitors.

– The Secretariat has enhanced and packaged as *WPA Courier* the regular mass mailings with informational and consultative materials that are sent to all Member Societies, Sections, and other components of WPA approximately every six weeks.

### Supporting the work of Zonal Representatives

The WPA structure of Zonal Representatives, the roots of which as ‘Permanent Council’ date back to the Constitutional Assembly of 1950, was